



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530*

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

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FARC Logistical Network Commander and Two Collaborators Plead Guilty to Providing Material Support to the FARC

Washington, D.C. - A former high-ranking FARC 1st Front member and logistical network commander, Nancy Conde Rubio, and two collaborators, Ana Isabel Pena Arevalo and Luz Mery Gutierrez Vergara, have pled guilty to providing material support to the FARC, announced Ronald C. Machen Jr., U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, David S. Kris, Assistant Attorney General for the National Security Division, John V. Gillies, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") Miami Field Office, Anthony V. Mangione, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") Miami Field Office, and Chris K. Amato, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service ("DCIS") Southeast Field Office.

Earlier this afternoon, before the Honorable Royce C. Lamberth, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the two FARC collaborators, Ana Isabel Pena Arevalo and Luz Mery Gutierrez Vergara, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (in Spanish, the "Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia," commonly known as the "FARC"). Last week, on March 17, 2010, the former high-ranking FARC 1st Front member and logistical network commander, Nancy Conde Rubio, pleaded guilty to the same offense.

All three defendants are Colombian nationals. Conde Rubio, 37, was extradited from the Republic of Colombia in September 2009; Gutierrez Vergara, 32, was extradited in April 2009; and Pena Arevalo, 47, was extradited in March 2009.

According to the government's proffer of evidence, as agreed to by the defendants at the plea hearings, Conde Rubio was the leader of the 1st Front's logistical support network. To supply itself, the FARC's 1st Front relied on a network of individuals with access to Colombia's metropolitan and commercial centers, as well as to product markets in other countries. It also

relied on individuals involved in trafficking in narcotics, who had access to weapons, foreign currency, and other supplies, such as high technology communications equipment.

The 1st Front commander and Conde Rubio directed other members of the logistical support network to obtain and transport materials and supplies. One primary method of communication used to operate the network was by satellite telephones obtained by Conde Rubio from the United States. FARC members obtained cash from drug dealers in exchange for FARC controlled cocaine, and then transferred funds to the FARC collaborators who were members of the conspiracy so that they could purchase the materials and supplies needed to operate the 1st Front. Materials and supplies were transported to the FARC in airplanes via clandestine airstrips located in Colombia and elsewhere, in trucks, and in river boats navigating remote jungle rivers that traverse rural areas of Colombia and neighboring countries.

Gutierrez Vergara and Pena Arevalo served in the logistical support and supply network as radio call center operators, patching through high frequency radio calls from FARC leaders operating in the jungle to co-conspirators in urban areas responsible for obtaining materials and supplies for the FARC guerillas. Because neither land line nor cell phone service was available in the jungle areas controlled by the 1st Front, satellite telephones and high frequency radios were the only methods of electronic communication available.

The FARC is engaged, and has been since its inception in 1964, in armed conflict against the government of the Republic of Colombia. It seeks to destabilize all levels of the Colombian government through violence, including murders, hostage-takings and threats. In addition, the FARC has been strongly anti-American, characterizing American citizens as “military targets,” and has engaged in violent acts against Americans in Colombia, including murders and hostage-takings. The FARC held three Americans hostage from February 13, 2003, until they were rescued in a dramatic Colombian military operation on July 2, 2008. Beginning in September 2006, the three Americans were held hostage by the FARC’s 1st Front. As charged in the indictment, the logistical supply and communications network established by Conde Rubio was used by other FARC leaders to maintain control of and to transport the American hostages while they were being held by the 1st Front. Other alleged 1st Front leaders were charged in the indictment with hostage taking and related offenses, while other alleged members of the network – including narcotics traffickers and weapons dealers – were charged with providing material support or resources to the FARC.

Sentencing for Conde Rubio is scheduled for June 15, 2010, while Pena Arevalo and Gutierrez Vergara are scheduled to be sentenced on June 22, 2010. Pursuant to the plea agreement, if accepted by the court at the time of sentencing, Conde Rubio will serve a term of imprisonment of between 11 and 12 years. The two collaborators, whose roles were more minimal, each face a likely sentence of 37 to 46 months in prison.

In announcing the guilty pleas, U.S. Attorney Machen, David S. Kris, Assistant Attorney General Kris, FBI Special Agent in Charge Gillies, ICE Special Agent in Charge Mangione, and DCIS Special Agent in Charge Amato acknowledged the outstanding work of Colombian law enforcement and prosecution authorities, who worked cooperatively with the FBI, ICE and DCIS on this investigation. They also thanked Department of Justice National Security Division Trial Attorneys David P. Cora (Counterterrorism Section) and David Mudd (Office of Intelligence), and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Anthony Asuncion, Lynn E. Haaland, and M. Jeffrey Beatrice, who are prosecuting the cases.

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